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The Role of Libraries in enhancing intellectual freedom in Nigeria

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This study examined the Role of Libraries in enhancing intellectual freedom in Nigeria. Four specific objectives were set and four research questions answered. The study employed a descriptive survey design, population for the study was 106 subjects drawn from University of Agriculture Makurdi library staff and Benue State University Makurdi staff and was used for the study as sample size. Data was collection using a researcher's structured questionnaire. The data collected was analysed using mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics. Findings from the study revealed that no significant difference between mean ratings of the responses of FUAM library staff and BSU library staff on the impact of intellectual freedom to individuals, role of library in providing and protecting access to information on the right to express ideas as the basis for a self-governing by every individuals, challenges militating against provision of public information by libraries in and strategies for enhancing provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria. The study concluded that intellectual freedom values in all aspects of life. It was recommended that libraries should employment of qualified hands into administration. Nigerian institutions should be encouraged to develop a strong reading culture by organizing prize competition and Government should set up policies that ensure regular allocation of funds to libraries.

Keywords: Role, Libraries, Enhancement and intellectual freedom

INTRODUCTION

Some scholars regard intellectual freedom (freedom of opinion, free expression and access to information) as a kind of luxury that is only relevant in comfortable, established economies. The role of intellectual freedom is much more important in the functioning of the individual and society than you can see if you only concentrate on the more obviously basic rights. Many cultures and countries believe that the freedom of information and an individual's right to privacy are key components of personal growth, cultural understanding, and a peaceful world. People who explore the world widely and question norms have the ability to explore and question commonly accepted beliefs, find new answers to challenges, and invent methods for improving life on earth. An educated free-thinking society can develop new scientific understandings, create innovative technologies, and advance new ideas that move the world's communities forward. This belief in the importance of intellectual freedom was strongly agreed to by many countries after World War II (Webster, 2003).

Following that war there was a powerful recognition that governments, through acts of war, had destroyed societies and decimated cultures. World leaders worked together to attempt to secure world-wide lasting peace by forming the United Nations and creating guiding documents.

In 1999, Barbara M. Jones observed that "all the major intellectual freedom issues of the past decade are arguably more applicable to academic libraries than to any other type of library." Nearly twenty years later this observation is still largely valid. As the "nerve centre of the intellectual potential of the university," (Nye & Barco, 2017 and Kuhl, 2000), the academic library represents a critical, if not thecritical, point of intersection between two distinct but related freedoms namely, intellectual freedom and academic freedom. This essay will explore this intersection and thereby consider how issues of intellectual freedom affect the academic librarian. I will suggest that a basic understanding of the similarities and differences between intellectual freedom is important for academic librarians as they strive to uphold the mission of the library and the mission of the academy (Alfino& Koltutsky,2017 and Tylor, 2005).

In December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) recognized the importance of intellectual freedom when it adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The formation of the United Nations and the creation of this document mark an important moment in world history when diverse war-torn countries were committed to finding a common good in order to maintain world-wide peace (United Nations, n.d. a). The countries that worked to form the UN reached consensus believing the best way to maintain peace was to allow people to live freely, without oppression. One of the important aspects of living a free life without oppression is intellectual freedom. Article 19 of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights outlines the intellectual freedoms inherent to all humans. These rights include: "the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers" (United Nations, 2018). Intellectual freedom is also acquired from library.

Library is the collection of written knowledge in some sort of repository is a practice as old as civilization itself. Library derived from the word "liber" meaning book can be defined as organized collection of published and unpublished books and audiovisual materials with the aid of services of staff that are able to provide and interpret such materials as required, to meet the informative research, educational and recreational needs of its users. Libraries are regarded as agencies through which sources of information of accumulated knowledge and experiences are selected, acquired, organized, preserved and disseminated to those who need them. In line with

this, Onwubiko and Uzoigwe (2004) (Barbara, 2015) defined library as an information center located in an organization, institute, agency, industry, government agencies etc to satisfy the information needs of the individual client and the realization of the broad goals and objectives of the parent organization. This can be achieved through the acquisition and dissemination of information to specific kinds of users. Libraries are established for the systematic collection, organization, preservation and dissemination of knowledge and information. (American Library Association (ALA), 2016) and (Rajkoomar, 2012) affirmed this by stating that library is a treasure-house of knowledge. It is very important for man to preserve and maintain the valuable knowledge and information contained in the books and documents because we want to preserve our knowledge and wisdom for the coming generations. By preserving the documents in a library this knowledge can be made available to others so that they can benefit from it.

The central mission of a library is to collect, organize, preserve, and provide access to knowledge and information. In fulfilling this mission, libraries preserve a valuable record of culture that can be passed down to succeeding generations. Libraries are an essential link in this communication between the past, present, and future. Whether the cultural record is contained in books or in electronic formats, libraries ensure that the record is preserved and made available for later use. Libraries provide people with access to the information they need to work, play, learn, and govern. The purposes of libraries have been changing over times becoming more faceted and multifarious. This modern concept of the library makes it defy the definition given to it in the earlier times. Libraries are not institutions/building/warehouses/stores etc. of materials, but are agents of educational, social, economic and political changes or revolutions in the community and their doors are now open to all who need them. Leheman (2011) (American Library Association (ALA), 2017) was of the opinion that the future of library will be as a knowledge centre that is dynamic, where not only the librarian, the "books" (whether real or virtual), and the users engage in an interchange of ideas but the library architecture acts as not only a surrounding framework, but also as a healthy "space" where ideas can flourish, live, grow and even be protected. Hence, the library has become a place entrusted with the acquisition, organization, preservation, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information in whatever format it might appear. In addition to providing materials, libraries also provide the services of librarians who are experts at finding and organizing information and at interpreting information needs. The excellence of the library, it should be remembered, is dependent on the quality of its personnel and their zeal (Norwegian ministry of Justices and policy, 2005) and (Winston, 2003).

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to examine the role of libraries in enhancing intellectual freedom in Nigeria. Specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the impact of intellectual freedom to individuals in Nigeria
2. Examine the role of library in providing and protecting access to information on the right to express ideas as the basis for a self-governing by every individual
3. Identify challenges militating against provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria
4. Identify strategies for enhancing provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the impact of intellectual freedom to individuals in Nigeria?
2. What is the role of library in providing and protecting access to information on the right to express ideas as the basis for a self-governing by every individual?
3. What are the challenges militating against provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria?
4. What are the strategies for enhancing provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria?

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of FUAM library staff and BSU library staff on the impact of intellectual freedom to individuals in Nigeria
2. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of FUAM library staff and BSU library staff on the role of library in providing and protecting access to information on the right to express ideas as the basis for a self-governing by every individual
3. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of FUAM library staff and BSU library staff on the challenges militating against provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria
4. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of FUAM library staff and BSU library staff on the strategies for enhancing provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria

METHODOLOGY

The area of the study is Benue State. This study employed a survey research design. The population for this study was 106 subjects comprising 14 library staff from University of Agriculture Makurdi and 92 library staff from Benue State University Makurdi. There was no sampling for the study. The entire population was used for the study as sample because the population size could be handled effectively by the researcher.

The instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire titled "Role of Libraries in Enhancing Intellectual Freedom in Nigeria Questionnaire (RLEIFNQ). The instrument which was developed by the researcher was divided four sections based on the research objectives. The questionnaire had restricted response options of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) with corresponding values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The data for this study will be collected by the researcher and 3 research assistants.

Data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics. Mean was used to answer the research questions. The bench mark for this was 2.50. Inferential statistics (t-test) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Questions 1

What is the impact of intellectual freedom to individuals in Nigeria?

Data for answering research question 1 is presented in Table 1:

Result in Table 1 shows that 5 items had their sum mean values ranging from 2.92 to 3.28 while and were above the bench mark of 2.50. This shows that the respondents agreed that the 5 items are impact of intellectual freedom to individuals in Nigeria.

Research Questions 2

What is the role of library in providing and protecting access to information on the right to express ideas as the basis for a self-governing by every individual?

Data for answering research question 2 is presented in Table 2:

Result in Table 2 shows that all the 5 items had their sum mean values ranging from 2.94 to 3.28 and were above the bench mark of 2.50. This shows that the respondents

Table 1: Mean of Respondents on the impact of intellectual freedom to individuals in Nigeria (N=106)

S/N	Item Statement	N_1	N_2	$\overline{x}_1$	$\overline{x}_2$	Xs	Remarks
1	Living curiously and coming up with new solutions to problems	92	13	3.23	3.15	3.19	Agree
2	Provides our world with innovation: new technology and cures to diseases	92	13	3.37	2.77	3.07	Agree
3	Supply information on new ways of providing food to starving communities	92	13	3.04	3.00	3.02	Agree
4	Intellectual freedom enriches culture	92	13	3.26	2.61	2.92	Agree
5	Provide the ideas and information, in a variety of formats, to allow people to inform them	92	13	3.47	3.08	3.28	Agree
	Grand Mean			**3.27**	**2.92**	**3.10**	

N_1 = number of FUAM library staff, N_2 = number of BSU library staff, $\overline{x}_1$ = mean of FUAM library staff, $\overline{x}_2$ = mean of BSU library staff, $\overline{x}_s$ = sum mean
Source: Field survey, 2019

Table 2: Mean of Respondents on the role of library in providing and protecting access to information on the right to express ideas as the basis for a self-governing (N=106)

S/N	Item Statement	N_1	N_2	$\overline{x}_1$	$\overline{x}_2$	Xs	Remarks
1	Libraries and librarians select information required for individual	92	13	3.23	3.15	3.19	Agree
2	Libraries and librarians produce information to all users	92	13	3.37	2.77	3.07	Agree
3	Provide access to information	92	13	3.47	3.08	3.28	Agree
4	Identify the relevant information needed by individuals	92	13	3.03	2.85	2.94	Agree
5	Retrieve and organize information to users	92	13	3.41	3.00	3.20	Agree
	Grand Mean			**3.27**	**2.97**	**3.14**	

N_1 = number of FUAM library staff, N_2 = number of BSU library staff, $\overline{x}_1$ = mean of FUAM library staff, $\overline{x}_2$ = mean of BSU library staff , $\overline{x}_s$ = sum mean
Source: Field survey, 2019

agreed that the 5 items are the role of library in providing and protecting access to information on the right to express ideas as the basis for a self-governing by every individual.

Research Questions 3

What are the challenges militating against provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria?
Data for answering research question 3 is presented in Table 3.

Result in Table 3 shows that 9 items had their sum mean value ranged from 2.59 to 3.23 and were above the bench mark of 2.50. This shows that the respondents agreed that the 9 items are challenges militating against provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria.

Research Questions 4

What are the strategies for enhancing provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria?
Data for answering research question 4is presented in Table 4.

Result in Table 4 shows that out of 7 items had sum mean values ranged from of 2.82 to 3.53 and were above the bench mark of 2.50. This shows that the respondents agreed that the 7 items are strategies for enhancing provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of FUAM library staff and BSU library staff on the

Table 3: Mean of Respondents on the challenges militating against provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria (N=106)

S/N	Item Statement	N_1	N_2	$\overline{x}_1$	$\overline{x}_2$	Xs	Remarks
1	Poor library administration	92	13	2.80	3.00	2.90	Agree
2	Poor reading culture of Nigerians	92	13	2.67	2.76	2.72	Agree
3	Mismanagement of small budget	92	13	3.00	2.84	2.92	Agree
4	Irrelevant/outdated information	92	13	3.67	2.84	3.23	Agree
5	Lack of funds	92	13	2.97	2.85	2.91	Agree
6	Poor infrastructure	92	13	3.15	2.54	2.85	Agree
7	Inconsistent government policy	92	13	3.11	2.08	2.59	Agree
8	Monetized borrowing	92	13	3.49	1.84	2.67	Agree
9	Poor aesthetic that discomfort people	92	13	2.90	2.31	2.61	Agree
	Grand Mean			**3.08**	**2.56**	**2.82**	

N_1 = number of FUAM library staff, N_2 = number of BSU library staff, $\overline{x}_1$ = mean of FUAM library staff, $\overline{x}_2$ = mean of BSU library staff , $\overline{x}_s$ = sum mean
Source: Field survey, 2019

Table 4: Mean of Respondents on the strategies for enhancing provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria (N=106)

S/N	Item Statement	N_1	N_2	$\overline{x}_1$	$\overline{x}_2$	Xs	Remarks
1	Employment of qualified hands into administration	92	13	3.19	2.87	3.03	Agree
2	Encourage reading culture among Nigerians by prize competition	92	13	3.49	3.92	3.70	Agree
3	Make library stand independently from the it collects funds from	92	13	3.12	2.69	2.90	Agree
4	Administrator reform and regular update	92	13	3.18	3.53	3.35	Agree
5	Government should set up policies that ensure regular allocation of funds to libraries	92	13	3.03	2.61	2.82	Agree
6	Provision of adequate infrastructures	92	13	3.14	2.92	3.03	Agree
7	Encourage the new government to follow up past government	92	13	3.14	3.92	3.53	Agree
	Grand Mean			**3.18**	**3.21**	**3.20**	

N_1 = number of FUAM library staff, N_2 = number of BSU library staff, $\overline{x}_1$ = mean of FUAM library staff, $\overline{x}_2$ = mean of BSU library staff, $\overline{x}_s$ = sum mean
Source: Field survey, 2019

impact of intellectual freedom to individuals in Nigeria

Test of hypothesis 4 is presented in Table 5.

Data presented in Table 5 reveal that the t-calculated was 0.18 which was less than t-tabulated value of 1.66 at 0.05 level of significance with 104 degree of freedom. This result is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between mean ratings of the responses of FUAM library staff and BSU library staff on the impact of intellectual freedom to individuals in Nigeria is not

rejected. This implies that the two groups of respondents did not significantly differ in their responses on the impact of intellectual freedom to individuals in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of FUAM library staff and BSU library staff on the role of library in providing and protecting access to information on the right to express ideas as the basis for a self-governing by every individual.

Table 5: t-test Result on the impact of intellectual freedom to individuals in Nigeria

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Df	Std. Error	t-cal	t-tab	Remarks
Ext. Agents	92	3.27	0.84					
				104	0.06	0.18	1.66	NS
Lecturers	13	2.92	0.19					
Total	106							

N=number of respondents and Df = degree of freedom, NS=not significant
Source: Field survey, 2019

Table 6: t-test Result on the role of library in providing and protecting access to information on the right to express ideas as the basis for a self-governing

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Df	Std. Error	t-cal	t-tab	Remarks
FUAM library staff	92	3.27	0.90					
				104	0.06	0.04	1.66	NS
BSU library staff	13	2.97	0.57					
Total	106							

N=number of respondents and Df = degree of freedom, NS=not significant
Source: Field survey, 2018

Table 7: t-Test Result on challenges militating against provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Df	Std. Error	t-cal	t-tab	Remarks
FUAM library staff	92	3.08	0.98					
				104	0.07	0.18	1.66	NS
BSU library staff	13	2.56	0.39					
Total	106							

N=number of respondents and Df = degree of freedom, NS=not significant
Source: Field survey, 2019

Test of hypothesis 1 is presented in Table 6.

Data presented in Table 6 reveal that the t-calculated was 0.04 which was less than t-tabulated value of 1.66 at 0.05 level of significance with 104 degree of freedom. This result is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no difference between the mean ratings of FUAM library staff and BSU library staff on the role of library in providing and protecting access to information on the right to express ideas as the basis for a self-governing by every individual is accepted. This implies that the two groups of respondents did not significantly differ in their responses on the role of library in providing and protecting access to information on the right to express ideas as the basis for a self-governing by every individual.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of FUAM library staff and BSU library staff on the challenges militating against provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria.

Test of hypothesis 2 is presented in Table 7.

Data presented in Table 7 reveal that the t-calculated was 0.18 which was less than t-tabulated value of 1.66 at 0.05 level of significance with 104 degree of freedom. This result is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of FUAM library staff and BSU library staff on the challenges militating against provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria is upheld. This implies that the two groups of respondents did not significantly differ in their responses on the challenges militating against provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 4

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of FUAM library staff and BSU library staff on the strategies for enhancing provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria.

Test of hypothesis 3 is presented in Table 8.

Table 8: t-test Result on the strategies for enhancing provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Df	Std. Error	t-cal	t-tab	Remarks
Ext. Agents	92	3.18	0.11					
				104	0.05	0.08	1.66	NS
Lecturers	13	3.21	0.10					
Total	106							

N=number of respondents and Df = degree of freedom, NS=not significant
Source: Field survey, 2019

Data presented in Table 8 reveal that the t-calculated was 0.05 which was less than t-tabulated value of 1.66 at 0.05 level of significance with 104 degree of freedom. This result is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between mean ratings of the responses of FUAM library staff and BSU library staff on the strategies for enhancing provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria is not rejected. This implies that the two groups of respondents did not significantly differ in their responses on the strategies for enhancing provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research question 1 and hypothesis 1 was on the impact of intellectual freedom to individuals in Nigeria. Findings revealed that there is no significant difference between mean ratings of the responses of FUAM library staff and BSU library staff on the impact of intellectual freedom to individuals in Nigeria. The findings are similar to a study conducted by Bakare (2018) which revealed that intellectual freedom provides our world with innovation new especially the technology and cures to diseases, supply information on new ways of providing food to starving communities and enriches culture.

Research question 2 and hypothesis 2 was on the role of library in providing and protecting access to information on the right to express ideas as the basis for a self-governing by every individual. Findings revealed that there is no difference between the mean ratings of FUAM library staff and BSU library staff on the role of library in providing and protecting access to information on the right to express ideas as the basis for a self-governing by every individual. The findings agree with a study by Storer (2014) which revealed that libraries provide access to information, identify the relevant information needed by individuals, retrieve and organize information to users and p**rovide** instruction in the use of, and preserve recorded expression regardless of the format or technology.

Research question 3 and hypothesis 3 was on the challenges militating against provision of public

information by libraries in Nigeria. Findings revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of FUAM library staff and BSU library staff on the challenges militating against provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria. The findings are different from a study carried out by Waller (2018) who found that the challenge of library is making services engaging to researchers and students, handling research data management tools, demonstrating your value, preserving material on a digital scale, a growing and diverse spectrum of customers, nailing down library policies, role development, digital licensing, subject-matter expertise and becoming familiar with a wide range of digital content.

Research question 4 and hypothesis 4 was on the strategies for enhancing provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria. Findings revealed that there is no significant difference between mean ratings of the responses of FUAM library staff and BSU library staff on the strategies for enhancing provision of public information by libraries in Nigeria. The findings are the same with a study conducted by Bakare (2018) who found out that provision of adequate infrastructures, encourage the new government to follow up past government and encourage borrowers to return on time and return on a borrow are solutions to problems of public information by libraries in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Educating all people about intellectual freedom and free access to information is one of the most important roles librarians have in democratic societies. The belief that intellectual freedom is a human right and that freedom to access information is a key component of human existence. However, they are series of factors that hinder provision of information for intellectual freedom. This depends on the beliefs and convictions of the people who live in our communities. The study concludes that intellectual freedom values in all aspects of life.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1.   Libraries should employment of qualified hands into administration
2.   Nigerian institutions should be encouraged to develop a strong reading culture by organizing prize competition
3.   Government should set up policies that ensure regular allocation of funds to libraries
4.   Government at all levels should provide adequate infrastructures to libraries to reduce the problem of space accommodation
5.   Stakeholders in education sector should encourage the new government to follow up past government to ensure continuity of policies

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